3 competitor analysis tools for strategic planning

Business

When starting a business, analysis is key. For instance, addressing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis) of your business provides valuable insight for success. And examining the political, economical, social, technological and additional factors (PESTLE analysis) helps gauge current and future obstacles.

But to see where your business stands amongst the competition, it's recommended to do competitor analysis. In this case, you analyze the strengths and weaknesses of your competitor and use that knowledge to your advantage. But to do a complete and concise analysis, you'll need to use a few competitor analysis tools to understand their web traffic, link building, and social media presence.

Web Traffic

It's 2016 and safe to say your competitor has a business website. Knowing how visitors use the competitor's site provides analytic insight into how you can adjust yours to be more appealing to consumers. Web traffic tools provide the following information:

- Bounce rate (how long visitors stay on specific pages)
- Overall time on websites
- Page views per day/week/month/year
- Percentage of web traffic

By examining any or all of these things, you can understand the people visiting the website. For example, if the bounce rate is high (say, 80-90%) it shows consumers barely stay on a sales page. Which could mean they're not

interested in the product. Or maybe they are interested but the copywriting is poor and doesn't entice them enough to click " buy".

These are potential weaknesses you can turn into a strength for your business.

Competitor Analysis Tools for Web Traffic: Alexa. com and Compete. com

Search Engine Optimization (Link Building)

Businesses want to rank well on Google. While many focus on specific keywords to attract their audience, another part of ranking well on Google is related to links. This is called " link building".

Businesses with blogs wish to be published on authoritative sites (or guest post) to link back to their website. The more links pointing to their website the higher their popularity.

We can now use competitor analysis tools to see the link popularity of competitor websites. What you'll be able to see is:

- External backlinks
- Referring domains
- How many backlinks per timeframe (e. g 10 links in 1 year)

If your competitor's website ranks well with high amounts of link popularity, it'll be hard to compete, particularly with keywords. So, target keywords your competitor doesn't (longer keywords rank better). For example, if you're selling hearing aids against the #1 hearing aid company, using the keyword

" hearing aids" won't do well. But " hearing aids in Cedar Rapids Iowa" could show a better turnout.

Competitor Analysis Tools for Search Engine Optimization: OpenSiteExplorer. com and MajesticSEO. com

Social Media

While it depends on your marketing strategy, chances are your business will use at least one type of social media to reach consumers. While some social media tools help you build a following, they can also help you learn more about who your competitor follows, their keywords, and growth over time.

Depending on the tool, you can also learn about your competitor's:

- Popular keywords
- Top posts
- Engagement per day

Competitor Analysis Tools for Social Media: FanpageKarma. com LikeAlyzer. com

Analyzing competition with competitor analysis tools is important to shape your own business approach. While it's recommended to do competitor analysis to adjust your marketing and business strategy, getting too caught up in what they're doing can stifle your growth. Use these tools to help your business without hindering progress.

Image: Olivier Le Moal/Shutterstock. com